

Jenny Le - TX

No announcement was needed. As she gracefully walked into the room, everyone came to attention and audibly gasped. It was Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Despite the intrigue and mystique of the Supreme Court (as evidenced by Jakub's grumbling when cameras were not allowed in the main part of the court), Justice Sotomayor was surprisingly down to earth. As she came down the aisle, I could see Daniel from Maryland almost die of bliss when she touched his shoulder as well as Josh and Michael from DoDea and California bounce out of their seats.

Justice Sotomayor painted a portrayal of the Supreme Court as a discussion among colleagues of mere law and order instead of it being the foundation upon which our nation's justice system counted upon, the second highest court in the land after the basketball court above it. I cherished this moment, among others, the most because instead of stilted answers and formalities, Justice Sotomayor gave us her perspective as the newest justice of the Supreme Court as well as advice that would last a lifetime. "In college, take what intrigues you and before long, you will have found your passion." (paraphrased quote)

As cheesy as it sounds, looking back, the most memorable moments that I will take from this won't be shaking President Barack Obama's hand or having Judge Henry speak to us (although those were amazing), but rather the informal discussions with the distinguished 17 military mentors and 103 other delegates. Whether it was on the bus, at the table, or while in an elevator cramped with 15 other delegates, I have never been able to discuss politics, international relations, and general societal problems on a level as in-depth and intellectual.

The Hearst Foundation, 17 military mentors, 103 other delegates, USSYP staff, and distinguished speakers and guests, thank you for allowing me to participate in Washington Week.